

The Public Session was called to order by Ms. Wedge at 6:45 PM. The following members were present:

Ms. Sylvia Wedge, Chair	Mrs. Terri Cortvriend, Clerk	Mrs. Marge Levesque
Mr. Richard Carpender, V. Chair	Mr. Jamie Heaney	Mr. Michael Buddemeyer

Also Present: Dr. Lusi, Christine Tague, and Patti Cofield

Absent: Mr. Douglas Wilkey

A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to R.I. Law 42-46-5, Exceptions (a)(1) Job Performance/Personnel Matters, (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and/or Litigation; or (a)(8) Student Discipline. So voted 6-0.

Public Session recessed at 6:45 PM and resumed at 7:04 PM.

1. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Ms. Wedge announced that an Executive Session was held at 6:45 PM on legal matters, and no votes were taken. Mr. Carpender announced that a Negotiations Subcommittee meeting was held on February 7, 2008, under Rhode Island General Law 42-46-5 (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and/or Litigation. A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque and seconded by Mr. Heaney to move into Executive Session. There were discussions on negotiations and status, but no votes were taken. The meeting adjourned back into Public Session, and a motion was made by Mrs. Levesque and seconded by Mr. Heaney to seal the minutes.
2. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Dr. Lusi reminded the Committee that they are invited to a workshop with the Town Council tomorrow night to discuss 3-year budget forecasting, and a memo written by Mr. Driscoll in preparation for that meeting was distributed to the Committee. Dr. Lusi also distributed a letter she sent to Mr. Driscoll regarding the Town's request for the return of the School Department's surpluses.

Dr. Lusi reported that we had a number of issues in our schools over the past few days with bursting pipes because of the extreme cold and power outages on Sunday. She thanked Mr. Davidson, and our Principals and staff for all of their efforts, and our students for their patience.

Dr. Lusi announced that she received notification from the Department of Education regarding the U.S. Department of Education's designated teacher shortage areas in Rhode Island during the 2007-08 school year. They are: Bilingual Spanish PK-12; English as a Second Language; Secondary (7-12) – Chemistry, General Science, Mathematics, Physics, and Spanish; School Nurse Teachers; Special Education – Early Childhood Special Educators, Elementary/Middle Special Educators; Middle/Secondary Special Educators; and Severe Profound Special Educators; Special Subjects – Home Economics, Library Media, Technology, and Theatre; and Support Professionals – Reading Specialist Consultants and

Speech Language Pathologists. Designation of teacher shortage areas in the state enables borrowers to qualify for deferment of loan repayment under the Stafford Loan and Supplemental Loans for Students programs and for scholars to qualify for the reduction of a teaching obligation under the Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship Program.

Dr. Lusi announced that she attended a Chamber of Commerce luncheon last week regarding the expansion of Naval Station Newport. The expansion will not have much of an effect on student enrollment, as many of the students brought to the Naval Station will be brought for a relatively short period of time (6 months), and it is historically young families or single individuals who usually have no children. In addition, those families stationed at the Naval War College normally reside all over Aquidneck Island.

Dr. Lusi invited everyone to a Thank You Ceremony and Celebration of our new High School Gymnasium, which will be held at 5:00 PM on March 14th. A "Save the Date" notice will be sent out on the districtwide listserv, as well. The Senior Auction and a High School play will also be held that night.

Dr. Lusi was pleased to announce that the Rhode Island Association of School Principals named Mr. Robert Littlefield as the Rhode Island Principal of the Year, and she will invite him to a future meeting to be appropriately recognized.

- a) **Teaching and Learning:** Assistant Superintendent Jermain announced that there is no school this Friday for students; however, there is Professional Development for teachers. In addition, Senior Project papers will be reviewed on Friday. She thanked Mr. Littlefield and the English Department for taking on this charge. Also on Friday, a Professional Development session will be held at Portsmouth Middle School for Teacher Assistants regarding co-teaching and how they can help teachers in the classroom. There will also be a session for teachers on implementing a Student Advisory Period at the middle school level, similar to what is currently in place at the high school level. Mr. Amaral and his leadership team felt it was important to bring the awareness down to the middle school level. Parent-teacher conferences are also being held on Friday. Mrs. Jermain announced that she will be attending the Department of Education's NECAP Reporting Session at the Marriott tomorrow. The purpose is for districts across the state to review the data, and she will present the information at a future meeting. She announced that she and the teachers would like to move forward with standards-based report cards, which would tie the students' proficiency levels into numbers. She stated that Mr. Ettinger and a districtwide team will be working on this, and additional information will be brought to the Committee at a future meeting. The performance-based report cards will be part of the Student Information System and will tie in to the state data reporting.
- b) **Finance and Operations:** Ms. Chris Tague reported that she and Dr. Lusi met with an actuarial firm last week that has analyzed the School Department's liability associated

with GASB 45, post-retirement benefits. She stated that this process will determine our future costs regarding contractual benefit obligations. As a result of a relatively young workforce, our required amount for FY'09 is minimal (approximately \$7,000). Ms. Tague stated that it has minimal impact at this point; however, we do need to revisit it in the next couple of years.

- c) **High School Liaison:** Miss Julie MacDougall reported that the Senior Project papers were due today, and teachers will be reviewing them on Friday to determine if they are proficient. Miss MacDougall invited everyone to the Senior Auction and Cinderella Play on March 14th.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2007, meeting. So voted 5-0-1. Ms. Wedge abstained due to her absence from that meeting. The approval of the minutes of the meetings held January 8, 2008, and January 22, 2008, will be presented on a future agenda.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

- a) **Teacher Retirement.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the School Committee accepts the resignation for retirement of Mary L. Correia, Guidance Counselor at Hathaway School, effective with the last day of the 2007-08 school year."
- b) **Teacher Retirement.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the School Committee accept the resignation for retirement of Fortuna S. Pietrzyk, Grade 2 Teacher at Melville School, effective with the last day of the 2007-08 school year."
- c) **Teacher Retirement.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the School Committee accept the resignation for retirement of Fay A. Sisson, Special Education Teacher at Portsmouth High School, effective with the last day of the 2007-08 school year."
- d) **Teacher Retirement.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the School Committee accept the resignation for retirement of Wendy Lamont-Woolbright, Speech and Language Pathologist at Elmhurst School, effective with the last day of the 2007-08 school year."
- e) **Appt. – Grade 8 Spanish Teacher, PMS.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, "that the Committee affirms the Superintendent's appointment, Recommendation #1-2/12/08, to the position of Grade 8 Spanish Teacher, full-time, at

Portsmouth Middle School, effective immediately, with full salary and benefits retroactive to the beginning of the 2007-08 school year.”

A motion was made by Mr. Carpenter and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. So voted 7-0. Dr. Lusi announced the appointment of Jessica Kokolski to the position of Grade 8 Spanish Teacher at Portsmouth Middle School.

5. **BUSINESS AGENDA**

- a) **Report on Expenditure of Warrant Money.** Ms. Tague explained how we have spent and plan to spend the remaining monies in our technology/instructional materials and buildings warrants. She stated that the building warrant spreadsheet shows total funding available; itemized expenses that have already been charged to the warrant; and an outline of the plans for expending the remaining funds. She reported that as the committee knows from participating in the facilities tours, we face a number of pressing facilities needs. All of the expenditures that have been made to date were pressing, and in some cases were emergency in nature. She explained that the remaining itemization was made by prioritizing our many existing needs. The high school track currently represents a trip-and-fall hazard to our students, as well as to the community members who use it. The telephone systems are antiquated and need to be upgraded to both reduce costs and increase functionality. The section of the floor in front of the old Portsmouth High School gymnasium is literally rotting through. The smaller investments in items such as carpeting are for areas that are really poor; and the air conditioning is to lengthen the life of new carpeting in the Melville Library and our computers in the Portsmouth Middle School computer lab. Ms. Tague reported that repairing the emergency generator at Portsmouth High School is imperative. All of the remaining monies are being put into replacing windows at Portsmouth High School, which is a priority. She reported that many of our buildings have old, energy inefficient windows. Replacing all of the windows at Portsmouth High School would cost over a million dollars, but \$300,000 is a start. In addition, \$50,000 is being reserved as a contingency fund in the event we have some unforeseeable building needs during the remainder of the school year. The Facilities Committee will address the priorities that the School Department is facing in the future regarding building improvements. Ms. Tague reported that resurfacing the track was re-estimated at \$288,600; and we will be sending a bid proposal out in the middle of March, with an expectation of doing the repairs in late spring. We are leaving approximately \$50K for emergencies and contingencies.

Ms. Tague reported that there is a grant program for HVAC equipment, and she will be working with the Facilities Committee on this. Mr. Davidson explained that the state has awarded four contractors a license to work with School Departments to perform the work, and the cost is reduced. He stated that no School Department money will be used for

these projects. Dr. Lusi stated that we would need School Committee and Town Council approval to move forward with this.

Mrs. Jermain addressed the technology warrant. She reported that all items and projects were reviewed. Presently Ms. Muller and Ms. Darmody are working on submitting the E2T2 grant to the Department of Education. This grant draft will be completed by March 1st, reviewed, and edited; and then it will be presented to the Department of Education by mid-March. She stated that we are hoping for as many high school and middle school teachers as possible to participate. Ms. Muller is reviewing the final dollar amounts and prioritizing with the new Technology Plan.

- b) **Non-Renewals/Displacements/Terminations.** Dr. Lusi referred to her memo describing the types of non-renewals and displacements. She stated that the total number of lay-offs and displacements is 32; however, there are different categories and they have different meanings attached to them. The first three categories of people are laid off every year. The next section is basically non-renewals because of the enrollment projections and consists basically of elementary-certified teachers. She stated that these are not necessarily layoffs she would recommend, however, they are ones she feels a need to layoff at this time. The next category is displacements. She announced that we are having another meeting February 26th, and she reserves the right to bring more names forward that night.

Attorney Updegrave stated that teachers who are affected must receive formal notice of their possible non-renewal before March 1st of each year, and a pre-deprivation hearing is held. He explained that since this is a pre-deprivation hearing, no dialogue will take place with the School Committee. Only members of the community who are pre-registered shall be able to speak to the Committee. Comments from the public should not be made about any specific individual teachers in order to preserve confidentiality. Comments will be limited to the 2-minute restriction. He stated that the teachers have received their notices prior to this meeting, and their names would not be announced but rather reported out in the form of a numerical designation. He asked if any member of the School Committee had any objection to the listing of non-renewals, terminations, and displacements. Hearing none, he marked the agenda as Exhibit A. Attorney Updegrave asked Dr. Lusi if she had the opportunity to deliver notices to the individuals affected, and Dr. Lusi responded Yes. He asked her if the report prepared by her in the ordinary course of business. She replied Yes.

- 1) **Substitute Teacher Non-Renewals.** Mr. Carpender made a motion that the long-term assignments of Substitute Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, formally end following the completion of their current placement with the Portsmouth School Department. The specific reason for this recommendation is that these substitutes have not been appointed to the position by the School Committee and thus are not eligible for continuous employment and rights of recall. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. No questions or comments by anyone. So voted 6-0.

- 2) **Teacher Non-Renewals.** Mr. Carpender made a motion that the teaching contracts of Teachers 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, not be renewed on June 17, 2008, or the last day of the 2007-08 school year. The specific reason for this recommendation is that these teachers were appointed to fill a 1-year position. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. There were no questions or comments. So voted 6-0.
- 3) **Teacher Non-Renewals.** Mr. Carpender made a motion that the teaching contracts of Teachers 12 and 13, not be renewed on June 17, 2008, or the last day of the 2007-08 school year. The specific reason for this recommendation is that these teachers were appointed to a position for less than the equivalent of 135 full days, which does not entitle them to seniority or rights of recall. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. There were no questions or comments. So voted 6-0.
- 4) **Teacher Non-Renewals.** Mr. Carpender made a motion that the teaching contract of Teachers 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20, not be renewed on June 17, 2008, or the last day of the 2007-08 school year. The specific reason for this recommendation is due to declining enrollment and the uncertainty of Federal, State, and local funds in support of the School Department's 2008-09 budget. If there is a reduction, the School Committee will have to reorganize programs, eliminate positions, and consolidate classrooms in order to operate within the total budget allocation for school operations. As a result of this reorganization and consolidation, these positions may be eliminated or senior teachers may opt for a position in these areas of certification. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. There were no questions or comments. So voted 6-0.
- 5) **Teacher Displacements.** The Mr. Carpender made a motion that the teaching contract of Teachers 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30, be eliminated on June 17, 2008, or the last day of the 2007-08 school year. The specific reason for this recommendation is due to declining enrollment and the uncertainty of Federal, State, and local funds in support of the School Department's 2008-09 budget. As a result of this, these teachers will be displaced and will be placed on the involuntary transfer list to retain rights to their current position at their current school. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. There were no questions or comments. So voted 6-0.
- 6) **Teacher Displacements.** The Mr. Carpender made a motion that the teaching contracts of Teachers 31 and 32, be eliminated on June 17, 2008, or the last day of the 2007-08 school year. The specific reason for this recommendation is that these teachers were appointed to fill a 1-year position. As a result of this, these teachers will be displaced and will be placed on the involuntary transfer list to retain rights to their current position at their current school. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 6-0.

Mrs. Feather thanked the School Committee and the Superintendent for their remarks regarding the layoffs.

- c) **Approval of Facilities Committee Charter.** Mr. Buddemeyer made a motion that the School Committee adopt the Facilities Charter as presented. Seconded by Mr. Carpender. So voted 6-0.
- d) **Approval of Facilities Committee Members.** Mr. Buddemeyer made a motion to approve the list of volunteers to the Facilities Committee as presented. The volunteers are Alexander Grande, John McDaid, and Steven Forand. Mr. Buddemeyer described the interview process that was held last week. He stated that the top three candidates who will further the needs of this Committee were chosen. The first meeting as a group will be held before the end of the month. Mr. Davidson will be scheduling a tour some time in March. There will be a visual presentation for those who cannot attend the tours. The public will be invited to the tours. Seconded by Dick Carpender. So voted 6-0.
- e) **Approval of Revisions to Policy #1330 - Community Use of School Facilities, 2nd Reading and Adoption.** Mrs. Levesque made a motion that the School Committee approves the proposed revisions as a second reading and adopts Policy #1330, Community Use of School Facilities as presented. Seconded Mr. Carpender. So voted 6-0. Dr. Lusi thanks the community members who participated in revising this policy.
- f) **Approval of Revisions to School Committee By-Laws, 2nd Reading and Adoption.** Mrs. Levesque made a motion that the School Committee approves the proposed revisions as a second reading and adopts the By-Laws as presented. Seconded by Mr. Carpender. So voted 5-1. Mr. Heaney was opposed to having one meeting per month.
- g) **Bid Award – Fitness Equipment, PHS.** Mr. Carpender made a motion that the Committee awards the contract for fitness equipment at Portsmouth High School to ProMaxima Manufacturing, LTD, in the amount of \$23,860. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 6-0.
- h) **Discussion/Approval – January Financials.** Ms. Tague explained that the revenue report provides for a projection throughout the remainder of this fiscal year. She stated that the report indicates we are projecting a preliminary shortfall of more than \$340,000, which mainly consists of \$187,501 in projected state aid, as well as \$145,940 less-than-estimated tuition from Little Compton. She stated that it is anticipated that this shortfall could be offset by a combination of additional Medicaid revenue, prior year fund balance, health care surplus, and any unexpended appropriations. On the expenditure side, the actual expenditures were 47.33 percent spent versus 53.7 percent for the same period last year (adjusted for Caruolo). When adjusted to include encumbrances, the amount spent to date is 79.86 percent. She stated that not all anticipated expenditures have been encumbered. In the general spending categories, Ms. Tague reported that all expenses are running around the 50 percent half year point. We will continue to monitor health/dental benefits, utilities, Regional Special Education, out-of-district tuitions, and long term substitutes. She reported that health care is currently running at 96.7 percent of the

cost/funding ratio, which is positive news; however, this could change over the next several months as a result of just a few large claims. She stated that since we are early into the heating season, it is too soon to tell if the entire utilities budget will be sufficient. The oil tanks were topped off prior to the end of FY 2007, but the electricity line item is already running at 57 percent of budget. She reported that both the Regional Special Education and out-of-district budgetary line items appear to be sufficient; however we were recently notified of two more critical care cases that are not encumbered or factored into the January report.

Dr. Lusi explained that she distributed a letter to the Committee that she will be sending to the Town Administrator tomorrow regarding his January 18th and February 12th letters requesting that our surpluses from GHGRI and the 2006-2007 fiscal year be returned to the Town for crediting to the General Fund. Dr. Lusi indicated that the School Department is sympathetic to the Town's needs and recognizes that we must work together to address the current fiscal issues facing our community. However, the School Department's current 2007-2008 budget is facing a projected revenue shortfall of more than \$340,000, and we continue to monitor the budget areas of health/dental benefits, utilities, Regional Special Education, out-of-district tuitions, and long-term substitute teachers, which are areas that have the potential for over-expenditure by the end of the fiscal year. Given the conditions the School Department faces in our current budget and the tenuous nature of state funding for the coming year, it would not be prudent to forward any potential surpluses to the Town for crediting to the General Fund at this time. Dr. Lusi stated that the Committee is invited to attend the budget workshop with the Town Council tomorrow night. Mr. Carpender stated that he agreed with Dr. Lusi that at this point in time, we don't know what our budget is going to look like at the end of the year, so it doesn't make sense to return the GHGRI surpluses to the Town in case we have a deficit at the end of the year. Mr. Larry Fitzmorris asked what the GHGRI revenue amount is, and Ms. Tague replied that is \$94,744.

Mr. Carpender made a motion to approve the January financials as presented. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 6-0. Mr. Carpender thanked Ms. Tague for adding the Actual Percent Expended column to the financial spreadsheets.

6. SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA

- a) **Finance.** Mr. Carpender stated that a schedule of subcommittee meetings has been established, and the meetings will begin the first week of March. He stated that the presentation will be significantly different this year, as a result of the Senate 3050 law. With 3050, we have a fixed rate and will know exactly how much we will have available. Dr. Lusi stated that the Committee has asked the principals to present what their real needs are, and we have been collecting the information on what the PTOs have been contributing.

- b) **Policy.** No report.
- c) **Gymnasium Construction Oversight Committee (GCOC).** Ms Wedge stated that all of the bricks, printed and unprinted, are being housed at JAM Construction.
- d) **Facilities.** Mr. Buddemeyer had nothing further to report at this time.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Carpenter and seconded by Mr. Heaney. So voted 6-0.
The meeting adjourned at 8:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Patti Cofield
Recording Secretary for

Terri Cortvriend, Clerk